

Churchdown School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137634
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	397462
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Scott HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,298
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Evans
Headteacher	Simon Packer
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Winston Road Churchdown Gloucester GL3 2RB
Telephone number	01452 713340
Fax number	01452 857367
Email address	school@churchdownschool.com

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional inspector

Peter Barnes

Additional inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional inspector

Helen Matthews

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 43 lessons. Meetings took place with groups of students, members of the governing body and a range of school staff including senior leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including safeguarding and behaviour records, the school's progress tracking information, development plans, monitoring and evaluation documents. The 228 parental questionnaires that were received were also considered. Inspectors also considered the 121 staff questionnaires and the 147 responses to the student survey.

Information about the school

Churchdown School converted to academy status, retaining its visual arts specialism, in November 2011. It is larger than the average secondary school with an average-sized sixth form. There are around three fifths boys on the school roll. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is low as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language. There is a higher proportion of students supported by school action plus and a lower proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs compared to schools nationally. The school meets current floor standards, which are the national minimum standards in attainment and progress expected by the government.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Churchdown School is a good school with improving attainment. It is not yet outstanding because attainment and progress are uneven as not all teaching is good or better.
- The leaders in the school have developed a rigorous approach to the development of teaching and learning and have a clear understanding of the school priorities. Performance management is effective and so strategies to raise attainment and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching are effective. The capacity for further improvement is strong and the school leaders are clear how further refinements of processes and analysis of impact can bring about more improvements. The school provides a range of good opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is particularly strong in the school's specialist area of visual arts.
- Achievement in the school has shown a significant improvement. Year 11 students have broadly average attainment on entry to the school although most students arrive with lower prior attainment. Students now make good progress including in the sixth form. This has ensured that attainment is now high overall.
- As a result of the development of teaching and learning the overall quality of teaching is good. The best of teaching ensures that students build on prior learning and are challenged with personalised work that encourages independent thinking. The school leaders are aware of a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the lack of individualised work to challenge all students more of the time.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are improving. They generally adopt positive and mature attitudes to learning. There is, however, a small but significant minority of students in the school that sometimes disrupt learning. It is for this reason that behaviour in the school is satisfactory rather than good. The

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systems in the school to ensure safety are good as are procedures for dealing with issues such as bullying.

- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well. There is a wide range of opportunities for personal development and academic success. Students are excellent role models in the school, they contribute a great deal to school life and behaviour in the sixth form is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine teaching further so that students' progress is consistently good or better, by:
 - ensuring more detailed planning of learning so that it more closely matches the individual needs of students
 - securing a higher proportion of outstanding teaching
 - analysing the impact of interventions and developments for all groups in the school.
- Accelerate the impact of the behaviour management strategies to challenge and support the small minority of students that disrupt the learning of others, so that they and other students can take greater advantage of the opportunities available in the school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

There has been a consistent improvement in achievement. Attainment varies between subjects. The prior attainment of students in Year 11 is broadly average and for other year groups is lower. Progress is good and at times better. The good progress indicated by the school's tracking information is supported by the good learning observed in lessons and scrutiny of students' work. The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C Grades at GCSE or equivalent is increasing significantly. This is also the case when English and mathematics are included. There has been a specific and successful focus in ensuring students gain A* to C grades in English and mathematics. The quality of students' work observed in lessons also supported the high attainment of students in many subjects. The development of literacy, and particularly strategies for supporting students' reading when they join the school, are securing firmer foundations for learning. The recent strategy to promote reading has seen a dramatic increase in the amount students read, particularly boys. Students made good progress in many of the lessons observed. Year 8 readily engaged in their German language lesson working at a high level and making the most of the variety of work and individual questions to help them to work independently and write in the target language. Similarly, learning was good as Year

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10 students made the most of the opportunities to develop their artwork and appreciated the comments and discussions with the teacher. This encouraged broader and deeper thinking, a sense of accomplishment and pride in their achievement during the lesson.

The staff work hard to ensure that the school is inclusive. Where there are differences in attainment between groups within the school these gaps are closing. The quality of learning for disabled students and those with special educational needs is similar to that for their school contemporaries and in some cases they make better progress but this is not as well analysed by the school in all cases. The sixth form has an inclusive approach encouraging all students to continue studying. The average attainment on entry to the sixth form is below the national average but this does not prevent students from making good progress and going on to further academic success. Students are motivated by the dedicated teachers and respond well to the good subject knowledge of teachers. During one Year 12 religious education lesson, students developed debating and discussion skills through challenging and critical analysis of text. They readily engaged in the tasks and made positive contributions to the development of learning of peers.

Parents, carers and pupils expressed positive views about the progress made and these views are supported by the inspection evidence.

Quality of teaching

The positive relationships with students and care are very evident throughout the school as are a strong subject knowledge and growing analytical approach to individual practice in the classroom. Strong questioning prompts students to think deeper and challenges students to move on at pace. The questioning is not always focused enough to ensure that students' progress is maximised and at times planning is not detailed enough to match the individual needs of learners so that their prior learning is used effectively. In the best of lessons, teachers and students work hard together and progress is brisk with an excitement for the learning and a thirst for more, generated by the enthusiasm and enjoyment of both students and teachers.

Teachers celebrate successes well in lessons and use opportunities to bring a real-world context to the learning and so prepare students for challenges in the wider world. Where teaching is less successful the challenge for individuals is not well matched to the needs of students; students generally try to make the best of the opportunities but at times some students choose not to engage and the pace of learning is slow. Students have shown a remarkable commitment to sport and despite the constraints that the physical education facilities present they work well with teachers in this department to bring about impressive success.

Teaching supports disabled students and those with special educational needs well. Support strategies and interventions are effective but their impact is not always analysed in detail to assess their wider impact on learning and personal

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development. Students who require support in developing reading are identified when they join the school and effective support helps them in their learning and access to wider opportunities. Students spoke with real enthusiasm about teachers they felt gave them a voice, helped them to learn and respected them.

Students expressed how they felt that most teachers cared for them and supported them in lessons. They appreciated how hard they work and the range of opportunities they have in the school. Students were concerned about a small proportion of teaching that was less than good and inspectors agree that teaching had improved but there are a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that prevent it from being outstanding.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in the school is satisfactory and improving. Students in lessons and around the school generally demonstrate positive attitudes and commitment to their studies. There are a small number of students that other pupils, parents, carers, the school and inspectors recognise as not making the most of the opportunities available in the school and at times disrupt learning. The systems in the school to promote safety are good. The school has had a positive impact on improving behaviour and has systems and processes to deal with bullying and incidents well. A small group of students have not adopted appropriate attitudes to learning yet and have had an adverse impact on their learning and that of others. Although this disruption is diminishing, the school is aware of further support needed to ensure this group of students succeed in adopting more positive approaches to learning.

The generally positive approach of most students helps to promote good progress even when lessons do not challenge students at times. Attendance has improved. Students contribute well to the school showing commitment to fund raising and to the school parliament. The sixth form students are positive role models to the rest of the school. This is demonstrated by their outstanding behaviour and the very positive contribution they make to the overall ethos of the school. They have a pride and commitment to the school and their lessons, and are effective learners with mature attitudes to securing success and have high aspirations for the future.

Students are aware of different forms of bullying. Inspectors' analysis of the school's records supports the students' views that the school deals with their issues and bullying quickly. They also said that they have someone in the school that they feel that they could talk to if they have a problem.

Parents' and carers' biggest concerns related to disruption of learning and while this was decreasing inspectors agree with them that it is not yet good. Parents and carers also had some concerns relating to bullying but inspectors' scrutiny of school systems highlighted that the school acted appropriately in dealing with students' concerns.

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Leadership and management

The senior leaders are supported by an increasingly effective middle leadership group. They are improving how they analyse their impact and this underpins their success in bringing about improvements. The governing body is proactive in the school and holds the school to account as well as ensuring appropriate support. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders are aware of the impact they have already had in securing improvements and there is a clear vision in the school to develop the quality of teaching further to secure even greater student success. The leadership and management of performance in teaching and learning are appreciated by staff and are helping to empower them to work in small clusters to share the good practice and develop further skills.

The school has demonstrated a good capacity for further improvement particularly through the improvements it has made in the quality of teaching and the achievement of students. The school has used its visual arts specialism well not only to raise attainment in art and design but also in other subjects and to develop a wider artistic and cultural awareness in students. This is clear from the high quality and imaginative work in The Curve, the school's prominent exhibition space. Clearer accountability at middle leadership level and more rigorous monitoring and use of progress tracking are underpinning a pathway for improvement. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and is aware that further detailed analysis will help them to move things on to the next level.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and allows students to develop a wide range of skills and academic success as well as mature attitudes to learning and the wider world. High aspiration and a commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all students are evident throughout the school but are particularly prevalent in the sixth form. Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive including sporting and cultural opportunities and overseas visits. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively enhanced through the curriculum provision.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 July 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Churchdown School, Churchdown GL3 2RB

I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. The school is well led and is good overall. It was good to talk to so many of you and to hear about your experiences in the school. This as well as the views expressed in the student survey helped us to gain a really clear picture of the school.

We were impressed with your attitudes and the way most of you are very committed to your studies. Behaviour is satisfactory. You told us that behaviour has improved but also about your annoyance over the small number of students who disrupt learning. We have asked the school leaders to reduce this disruption quicker so you can all take even more advantage of the wide range of opportunities in the school.

You make good progress in the school and now attainment is high. This is down to the positive attitudes of most students but also because of the hard work and care of the teachers. They have ensured that lessons have improved, and with this has come increased success for you. You are aware of the high level of knowledge your teachers have and told us about how they care and respect you. You are also aware of where teaching is not as strong. We have asked that the school focuses on improving the quality of teaching further so that there are more good and outstanding lessons that you regularly encounter.

We think that if teachers plan in greater detail to meet more individual needs then you will achieve more. You must, however, rise to the challenge. Please help to ensure the students who do not behave well do not dominate any aspect of the school. Many of you have demonstrated your commitment to the school and to your learning. The sixth form students are good role models who demonstrate outstanding behaviour. If you all show similar determination, your success will be still greater.

I wish you well and increased success.

Yours sincerely

Paul Scott
Her Majesty's Inspector

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